

LIBRARIANS AS ENEMIES OF BOOKS

RANDOLPH G. ADAMS

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LIBRARIANS AS ENEMIES OF BOOKS

RANDOLPH G. ADAMS

IN A little classic on the subject, William Blades enumerated certain of the enemies of books.¹ Victor H. Paltsits, of the New York Public Library, has remarked that Blades omitted what should have been his first and most important chapter.

That first chapter should have been devoted to librarians who mutilate books with embossing stamps or rubber stamps, write upon and muss the title pages, cut open leaves with scarred and ragged edges, write class-marks with white ink on the backs of the bindings, and do with them as one librarian said, "We fix our books so they will not be of use to anyone else."

While it is true that Blades did not particularly consider librarians, he did include "collectors" as agents of biblioclasm. In the half-century since Blades wrote, both "librarian" and "collector" have come, in America at least, to have meanings totally different from the significance attached to those words in the 1880's. The librarian, we are told at each successive presidential address² given before the American Library Association or its ganglia, is no longer a curator of books—he is an administrative official and a promoter of adult education. The modern American book-collector, we venture to suggest, is no longer the miser who gloats in seclusion over volumes he does not read and will not permit anyone else to read.³ He is more likely to be a close student of bibliography, who does not hesitate to write

¹ W. Blades, *The enemies of books*, was first published in the *Printers' register* (London, 1879). It has been printed in separate form, London, 1880 (2 eds.); 1881; Paris, 1883; London, 1888; New York, 1888; London, 1896, 1902.

² E.g., L. R. Wilson, "Restudying the library chart," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXX, 480.

³ The characters in Flaubert's *Bibliomanie* would never understand Sir William Osler's well-known dictum, "the true bibliophile has a keen pleasure in seeing an important document in its proper home." Flaubert's book may be read in Dr. Theodore W. Koch's translation, and Osler's point of view is set forth in the *Canadian Medical Association journal*, September, 1912, p. 834.

both popular and learned articles on the subject. It may even be said that the collector is picking up the mantle of scholarship dropped by the librarian as the latter ascends into the heaven of efficiency. This is entirely proper, as the book-collector is often a man of feeling and sentiment, characteristics which are in danger of being trained out of the modern librarian.

There is no need to view with alarm the evolution of the modern librarian. Bewailing his transformation would be quite useless. He has to think about enlarged organization, increased facilities for public service, and air-conditioning his stacks. Often he is driven by circumstances to regard books as replaceable commodities, which, if worn out in public service, have done their duty.

Many a book-collector or bibliographical expert would be a dreadful misfit if put in charge of a great public library. But who is going to think about those books which are irreplaceable? What is to be done about the rapid increase of libraries and collections in which public service is *not* the keynote of administration?

"SPECIAL COLLECTIONS"

In that standard reference book, the *American library directory*, one finds constant use of the term "special collection." Such an expression connotes the conception of a library as an aggregation of blocks of printed paper, which may contain practical information or mere literary expression. To call the Thomas Prince Library (now in the Public Library of the City of Boston) a "spec. Coll. Americana" is not likely to suggest that it contains two copies of the *Bay Psalm Book*. According to the *Directory*, there is in the city of Washington a certain "Folger Shakespeare Memorial," where there is a "special collection" on Shakespeare. For the sake of brevity, the *Directory* does not say "a man named Shakespeare," but it might just as well have done so. In the case of a library of rare books where a first edition of Champlain's *Voyages* is shelved next to a first edition of *Tom Sawyer* (*Ch* before *Cl*, of course), the system of the *American library directory* breaks down completely, and, in conse-

quence, the 1935 edition simply omits all mention of the Chapin Collection at Williams College.

The editor of the *Directory* freely admits that there has not yet been formulated a term to designate rare-book libraries, and permits us herewith to broadcast the plea that someone find the word before the next edition of the book. One thing is sure: it isn't "special collection."

What term, then, can we use to indicate that we are referring to the library wherein the technique of administration must be almost diametrically opposed to that which must prevail in the library which is trying to serve the *demos*, the library where the emphasis is placed not upon *use* but upon *conservation*? There can be hardly a doubt that such libraries exist and are coming to exist in greater numbers, either as separate entities or as the *sancta sanctorum* of public libraries. For example, Henry E. Huntington and Henry C. Folger erected separate library buildings, practically unconnected with any existing institution. Then again, the Browns of Providence and William L. Clements of Bay City erected separate buildings and gave to educational institutions already existing (Brown University and the University of Michigan) collections to be administered as separate divisions of those institutions. There is yet another example, where the library is given to be separately maintained inside an already existing library, such as the Harry Elkins Widener Collection at Harvard, or the Hampton L. Carson Collection at the Philadelphia Free Library.

Finally, there is the case of the collector in, let us say, Winesburg or Gopher Prairie, whose painstaking life-work in collecting rare books is handed over to the local librarian, and a first edition of Hawthorne's *Scarlet letter* is intrusted to a part-time page boy, who tosses it on a shelf alongside the "Everyman" or "Modern Library" edition of the same book. It is not improper to remark that, though the librarian of the Huntington Library is certainly not an enemy of books, it is hardly the fault of the librarian at the Gopher Prairie Public Library if he does not speedily become one.

It is possible that a real danger lies in the fact that not all

librarians detect the wistful desire of the collector, great or small, to want his collecting work preserved. It is equally possible that many librarians fail to observe that book-collecting comes before librarianship, that until books are collected they cannot be used in libraries, and that the specialist, whether he be a Folger or a collector of local Winesburg imprints, is performing that fundamental function and should be encouraged even to the point of coddling.

THE BOOK-COLLECTOR AS A PROSPECTIVE BENEFACTOR⁴

Let us consider those factors in modern life which, when recognized by the librarian, are even more important to him than increases in his book budget. If today a man makes a collection, what is he going to do with it? The epoch of the great family library is over. Apartment-house life, the migration of the children, all the disruptive tendencies of present-day life militate against the future building up of great libraries such as those of the dukes of Bridgewater, the dukes of Devonshire, and the like. A man cannot take his books with him when he passes on to the better world. Children do not always inherit their parent's tastes, and yet they are likely to have a very real interest in the money investment represented in the life-work of a collector. A new factor accentuates the foregoing—the inheritance-tax gentleman from Washington will want from a quarter to a half of the value of a great library.

When George Brinley's library⁵ was sold, there was a field-

⁴ There is a considerable literature on this subject. G. W. Cole, "Book-collectors as benefactors of public libraries," *Bibliographical Society of America, Papers*, IX, 47-110, is a good survey for Americans. Of the many particular studies, the following are worthy of note: L. L. Mackall, "Sir Wm. Osler, as a bibliophile," *Bulletin of the International Medical Museums*, No. 9 (1927); J. Christian Bay, "Edward Everett Ayer," *American collector*, IV (1927) 130; R. O. Schad, "Henry Edwards Huntington," *Huntington Library bulletin*, No. 1 (1931), pp. 3-33; and that most readable of all little books on the subject, Henry Stevens, *Recollections of Mr. James Lenox* (London, 1886). The last named has been somewhat facetiously called "Recollections of Henry Stevens by Henry Stevens with a few remarks on James Lenox," and it does contain a few extravagances. But it remains a book which should be regarded as the *sine qua non* in the education of a librarian. The foregoing titles are the merest suggestion of what has been written about individual collectors.

⁵ "Greatest Americana sale ever held," R. W. G. Vail, *The literature of book collecting* (New York, 1936), p. 32.

day for collectors, but something great was lost—the work of the collector. In so far as the Brinley books have come to rest in permanent repositories, Mr. Brinley's work has been partially salvaged. But, if a collector wants his scholarly work of collecting, as well as his books, conserved, he must look around and find, or erect, an institution in which that can be done. But *is* the institution of his choice (usually and quite properly selected locally, or for some purely sentimental reason) a fit trustee of his treasures?

The benefactor can get some idea of its fitness by asking what the institution of his choice is doing about its own *rariora*; for another impetus to the accumulation of rare books in libraries comes from the fact that America is growing up. Even trans-Appalachian institutions are celebrating centennials by the score. Any library that has reached its century mark is likely to have, merely by virtue of the passage of time, rare books upon its shelves, which should be removed from circulation and locked up.

Over a hundred years ago the great Isaiah Thomas, printer, publisher, and book-collector, gave to his friend, Timothy Alden, several hundred products of the Thomas press at Worcester. They were donated for the purpose of founding a new library in the wilderness of western Pennsylvania. Today Allegheny College has those books in excellent condition. How many century-old American libraries can show the books of the founder in mint condition? If they cannot, perhaps there have been some enemies of books occupying the librarian's office.

Whether the prospective benefactor be a collector of early printing in Gopher Prairie or whether he has riotously expended his substance on Grolier bindings, he will look rather closely at a librarian before he intrusts the results of his years of thoughtful work and painstaking care to an official who is interested primarily in adult education or statistical studies in the reading habits of the public. The man from Winesburg may have just as much fun collecting local imprints as Earl Spencer ever had in collecting Caxtons—and his work may be comparatively as

important. For there are today early Ohio and Minnesota imprints that are unique, though these states are not old in point of years. The librarian who fails to take care of the Winesburger as carefully as the John Rylands Library has taken care of Earl Spencer is not really friendly to books.

An equally important contributing factor in the building up of personal collections in this country is the increasing interest of Americans in preserving the evidences of their own local cultural history. If the immense new addition now being built back of the Library of Congress were doubled in size, it would probably be insufficient to hold the printed and documentary material necessary for a thorough investigation of the manifold phases of American cultural development. We have no right to expect the Library of Congress to do everything for us. It has given us a priceless advantage in providing Library of Congress cards; it is preparing an equally important work in the organization of its Union Catalog; it provides the only repository of copyright books (England has several to our one). But we have no right to expect the Library of Congress to provide a complete file of the early newspapers of Little Rock, Arkansas, or of the non-copyright publications of a private press in Phoenix, Arizona.⁶

No, in America this work must be taken over by local enthusiasts. The establishment of a federal library agency may help bring more readers to libraries, but it can hardly be expected to provide books of the type most worth preserving. Even if it is easy to look to the federal government to do all our work, in collecting at least, this will not help. Moreover, the Library of Congress itself, as Dr. Rosenbach has pointed out, has some serious lacunae, for it has no *Columbus Letter* of 1493, no Hariot's *Virginia* of 1588, and no *Bay Psalm Book* of 1640.

We must have more and more local repositories, more provincial centers of culture. If the material already exists, or has existed in the locality, it may well be the function of the local librarian to preserve that heritage. But, for reasons already sufficiently stressed, he cannot, for he has neither the time, the

⁶ See J. T. Winterich, in the *Publisher's weekly*, October 26, 1935, pp. 1537-40.

energy, nor the funds. Then the least he can do is to cultivate, foster, and even pamper the local zealot who is doing that job. The greatest encouragement he can give that local collector is to take care of the material already in the local library and to offer to safeguard what may be given to him. A librarian who cannot, or will not, do this, can hardly complain if he is classed as an enemy of books.

“THE GOOD, PRACTICAL LIBRARIAN”

At a meeting of eastern college librarians, held at Columbia University in November, 1935, one librarian lamented the necessity for “promotional activities” in his library in the following words:

If he is not already one, he [the librarian] will be forced to become a professional book-lover. Book-loving is no doubt a noble passion, praiseworthy in business men and other amateurs, but out of place in the temperament of the librarian.⁷

The selection of the words above suggests that this librarian places the book-lover in a class with the professional gambler—a person living in sin of some sort. The juxtaposition of the terms “business men” and “amateurs” conveys certain scorn as to the possible scholarly attainment of the business-man bibliophile.⁸ Moreover, this librarian says so clearly that book-loving is out of place in the “temperament of the librarian” that no one can possibly mistake his meaning. Aside from the fact that some minor Pierpont Morgan who planned to give his books to a library might be taken aback by this pronunciamento, one wonders what will happen to the books already confided to the tender mercies of librarians who share this view. If a librarian really wants to build up his institution, and if his temperament and training do not qualify him as a book-collector (as all too frequently they do not), is he the friend or the enemy of books?

⁷ T. E. Norton, “The college library and college teaching,” *School and society*, XLIII, 241.

⁸ An examination of James Lenox’ annotated copies of the Ternaux-Compans catalogs suggests that some business men are more scholarly than some librarians.

There is ever greater insistence today upon the business of "training for librarianship." That means the librarian must go to a school of library science, which is likely to be attached to a university. Here he meets a great many scholars and is influenced by their point of view. But, for every scholar with whom he comes into contact, he meets a dozen whom we properly term "mere scholars" —people who view books simply as a mass of print from which information is to be extracted. He hears the mere scholar assert that he wants *only the text* and that he would as soon use a facsimile, or reprint, as use the original. It is said that, upon one occasion, an academic person met Mr. A. Edward Newton. Newton has written extensively on the subject of book-collecting, and, as any dealer will attest, has probably done more to increase the appreciation and the reading of English literature than many a professor or librarian. To Newton the academic announced, "I am a scholar; to me a photostat is as good as the original." Newton swiftly countered, "Any man who would make a remark like that, would probably just as soon kiss a pretty girl through a piece of plate glass." The librarian should be careful how he makes light of the collector's enthusiasm lest he reveal his own shortcomings.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF RARE BOOKS

When a book comes to a library, the first question to be asked is this: "Is the book rare, or even potentially rare?" The correctness with which the question is answered is a fairly accurate measure of the taste, discrimination, and scholarship of the official who decides. Good taste and discrimination cannot be taught in schools of library science, and university degrees do not necessarily imply attainment in scholarship.

If it is decided that the book is rare, then the order department must see that no accession mark defaces it; the head classifier must be sure that the book is headed for that section of the library which is locked beyond the reach of the ordinary reader; the cataloger must take care that it is not mutilated by an embossing or perforating stamp, nor by a blotch of indelible ink, and that the binding is not defaced by a paper label or by white

ink on the spine. Then the curator of rare books must see that the book is placed upon the shelves of the treasure room in accordance with some system which may not be the Dewey or the Library of Congress. It is possible that no standardized system of classification of rare books will ever be accepted; the rules must be elastic and adjustable to the eccentricities of a particular collection. When asked the first principle of librarianship, the late Archibald C. Coolidge, director of the Harvard Libraries, replied: "Have very few rules and break them all." The manner in which a librarian can break his own rules is a criterion of sorts.⁹

But when the book has reached the treasure room, its dangerous career has only just begun. The treasure room need only be a locked case in the librarian's office. Louis XVI gave Benjamin Franklin some books for the newly founded University of Pennsylvania Library. As recently as our own college days, Morris Jastrow kept those books in his private office.

The rare book must now be kept away from all unfit persons. At this point many librarians throw up their hands and cry aloud, "But I cannot do these things; I am supported by the taxpayers, and the taxpayers demand service." The reply is exceedingly simple. "Dear librarian, you are also paid by the taxpayers to protect public property." More and more rare books are annually becoming public property. The ordnance officer who distributes army property without proper formality is court-martialed and sent to the Atlanta penitentiary. The librarian who allows rare books to be used without proper restrictions is an enemy of books. There are cases on record where trustees have discharged a librarian for inattention to the care of public property in the form of rare books—where the trustees actually had a greater appreciation of books than the librarian. Abuse and misuse of public property is a serious offense, as in America we are only just beginning to learn.

⁹ Dr. Wilberforce Eames once stood in a treasure room and inquired of the curator, "By what system do you arrange the books?" The curator timidly replied, "We use the chronological system, except when we don't want to." Dr. Eames replied, "It is a very good system. It is the one Mr. Lenox and I always used." A Scot, David Murray, put it thus: "The flowing tide of knowledge is apt to put the best devised schemes out of order . . ." (*Bibliography, its scope and method* [Glasgow, 1917], p. 43).

Quite recently we witnessed the havoc being wrought in the unique, earliest file of a certain newspaper in one of the largest American city libraries; there students from the local city college were observed pawing over the ancient and fragile papers in the preparation of "term papers" or "pre-seminar reports."¹⁰ When destroyed, as it is being destroyed by its improper use by unqualified persons, this file can never be replaced. If one could persuade Mr. Alexander J. Wall, librarian of the New York Historical Society, to tell his story, he would give some very explicit reasons why he now requires every student from a New York college or university who wants to use the file of John Peter Zenger's *New York Journal* to bring a letter in which that student's professor consents to be financially responsible for any damage caused by the student. A teacher who finds it necessary to replace a single copy of a New York newspaper for 1738 may discover that it costs him more than a month's salary. We all know of cases where the teacher thinks nothing of turning fifty pairs of grimy hands loose on the library's only copy of a fine book. We all know of cases where the professor gets exasperated and complains, "What are the books put here for but to be read?" The librarian can be ready with his answer: "The books are here for the use of fit and qualified persons. You are entitled to have your sophomores use to the point of destruction our set of the reprint of Henry Adams' *History of the United States*; but you are certainly not entitled to refer even a senior to our first edition presentation copy of Henry Adams' *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*, unless he is to read it under rigid supervision." The librarian who does not have the courage to face his readers in this fashion is certainly an enemy of books.

THE DISPOSAL OF USELESS OR OBSOLETE BOOKS

But readers are not the only danger which besets the career of the book. The amount of material which is piling up in libraries sometimes appals the poor librarian. He wants to get rid of

¹⁰ The librarian must distinguish carefully between the reader who is adding to human knowledge and the reader who is merely training himself so that later on he may add to human knowledge.

duplicates; he wants to dispose of "useless" books. Unfortunately and necessarily, this work in the greatest libraries must often be turned over to subordinates; and the librarian is even more appalled when he discovers that an assistant has been discarding as duplicates the copies from the private collection of the founder of the library—irreplaceable books.¹¹ Moreover, it takes an expert to determine which books are duplicates. There is the story of how the Library of Congress, many years ago, let go, as a duplicate, a book whose imprint proclaimed it to have been sold by Benjamin Franklin's firm. The Library had another copy of the book, with another and unimportant dealer's name in the imprint—so the Franklin item was let go as a duplicate. This estray was spotted by someone in the New York Public Library, where it was given a home. After the error was discovered, the curator of rare books at the Library of Congress waited five years for his opportunity to recover possession of the book. His patience was rewarded: but beneficiaries of such errors do not have to be as courteous as the director of the New York Public Library.¹²

The problem of the disposal of duplicates is fraught with danger. In 1623 the Stationers' Company, according to agreement, sent to the Bodleian Library at Oxford a certain book entitled *Mr. William Shakespeare's histories, tragedies and comedies*. This was probably among the finest copies of the renowned First Folio, as it was the only one intended for public deposit. By 1664 other editions had appeared. The "curators" at the Bodleian decided to sell "superfluous library books," and,

"Dartmouth and Yale have admirably protected themselves against this. The quaint old room in which the institution's "first library" was kept, has been carefully reproduced and reconstructed within the modern library. In it the "original library" has been reassembled as far as possible. The room is locked, and the books may be examined only by permission of the librarian. Disastrous fires at Charlottesville and Cambridge have left but a fraction of Thomas Jefferson's books for the University of Virginia, and but a fragment of John Harvard's library at his university. Probably no librarian at Williamsburg could have protected the books of William and Mary College against the soldiery of Lord Cornwallis and General McClellan. But if a Harvard librarian had sold as a duplicate a book from the library of John Harvard, that could hardly be called an "act of God." For obvious reasons, we will refrain from naming the institutions where this has actually taken place.

¹¹ R. G. Adams, ". . . and sold by Messrs. Franklin & Hall," *Pennsylvania magazine of history and biography*, LV (1931), 24.

among them, sold their 1623 Folio. Two hundred and forty-two years later, when the book was found, it cost the Bodleian \$15,000 to recover its own copy of the First Folio.¹³ As the sale of the book by the Bodleian was done "by order of the curators," it can be seen that this business of a librarian's taking it upon himself to decide for all time and eternity what is important and what is unimportant may properly class certain librarians as enemies of books.

There is a difference, of course, between disposing of duplicates and disposing of books which the librarian thinks he is qualified to pronounce useless. If a library has two identical copies of a rare book, it may sometimes be justified in disposing of one copy—provided the other is locked up. But the problem of determining what books are duplicates is not one to be left to subordinates, and not one upon which a librarian is entitled to trust his own judgment unless he is also an expert bibliographer, which many librarians are not.¹⁴ The librarian who is also a thorough bibliographer is, according to many addresses given before the American Library Association, passing off the scene and being supplanted by the librarian who contends that he must be an administrator.

As to "useless books," or "junk," as the harassed librarian sometimes calls them, a fine case history has come to our attention. A certain librarian took over a new job. He considered the mass of books. He took the *United States catalogue*, and, by its aid, he divided all the books into two classes: first, those which were in print; and second, those which were not. He disposed of the whole of the second class as "useless" and "obsolete." Now the story sounds fantastic, but unfortunately it is true. In principle it differs not a whit from the conduct of a trained librarian who arrogates to himself the decision of what books are useful and what are not. The capacity for correct classification probably is, as Aristotle is said to have remarked, the essence of human wisdom. Today, by force of circumstances, the librarian has become the chief classifier of all human knowl-

¹³ F. Madan, *The original Bodleian First Folio of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1905).

¹⁴ F. Madan, "The duplicity of duplicates," *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* XII (1911-13), 15.

edge. What the philosopher has given up, the librarian has been forced to take over. But it is a function to be exercised with humility. Even the greatest of librarians must feel some misgivings about assuming that he is an Aristotle.¹⁵ It is an open question as to whether any librarian should ever dispose of any book of which he has no other copy. Certainly if the head of a library of deposit and reference arrogates to himself the right to make decisions about books which are seldom, or never, used during his own brief life span, he cannot complain if he is classed as an enemy of books.

GIFTS WITH STRINGS

There are librarians who have a horror of gifts "with strings tied to them," that is, gifts upon which the donor imposes conditions. It is said there exists a library which received a gift stipulating that flowers be kept always in front of the donor's portrait. It is conceivable that a collection could be worth it; and unless we were misinformed as to the identity of the library which had that "string" attached, this gift *was* worth it. The dukes of Marlborough and of Wellington, even today, make annual pilgrimages to Windsor Castle, there to deposit with His Majesty one small French flag, in token of their obligation for the lands granted their ancestors after Blenheim and Waterloo.

If one will examine the deeds of gift, contracts, and other legal instruments whereby great collections are placed in institutions, one will be interested to observe that the collector does, all too often, regard the librarian as an enemy of books, from whom the treasures must be guarded. One would not impose the condition that "the books shall not be permitted to leave the building" were it not for the fact that in the offing is the public-service expert and his unholy passion for "interlibrary loans" of any kind of material.¹⁶

¹⁵ It is probably not true that a recent graduate of a school of library science classified the first edition of Thornton Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey* under "Civil engineering."

¹⁶ The gift-agreements of great libraries are worth study. Just as the study of early laws is all important to the social historian, because it tells, by prohibitions, what curious crimes the people were committing, so these legal contracts show what librarians are likely to do and what they must be restrained from doing.

We have all laughed at Mr. Edmund Lester Pearson's story of his intention to leave his books to a public library, *without any strings attached*. Of course, Mr. Pearson hastened to add, he would require the books to be kept in a separate room which was to be equipped with pink silk-damask chairs, silver lamps, and a curator who at all times wore a cutaway coat. Moreover, the catalog cards were to have gilt edges, and each book was to be forever sealed in a cellophane wrapper. But it is not conditions which go to these lengths of which we speak. It is rather the continued ordinary and decent care of his rare books which concerns the collector—the kind of care he gave them. The librarian who hesitates to accept gifts with such strings attached may be doing so because he is afraid of exposing his own shortcomings and of laying himself open to the charge of being an enemy of books.

If "strings" are attached, they may merely be the unreasonable whim of a prejudiced donor. But experience teaches us that they are much more likely to be accounted for by the fact that the donor is a better bookman than the librarian. This can easily be tested. Go to the private library of any well-known collector. In the first place, you are likely to find that a steel and concrete vault adjoins his library. You will find that, whenever he can, he has his books in their original bindings. If the original bindings are frail, or if the books are rebound by some noted artist, his treasures stand in well-made slipcases or solander cases. If he has old leather bindings (sheep or calf or the like), you will observe near by a bottle of one of those leather preparations recommended by Messrs. Lydenberg and Archer.¹⁷ You will discover that the vault is air-conditioned. Now seek the treasure room of any one of a hundred public libraries. You will find bindings broken and poor cripples tied up with pink tape; you will find books cracking at the joints; you will find rare pamphlets in scuffed and dirty paper envelopes instead of slipcases; you will find books on the floor, where the janitor is sure to wet them with his dirty mop; and of course you will

¹⁷ *The care and repair of books* (New York, 1931).

find books worn out by constant use at the hands of improper persons. Perhaps this is why strings are attached to gifts.

Librarians have a horror (and justly so) of the prospective donor who has a mass of late reprints of common classics and wants them housed as treasures. But the careful librarian does not assume that a nineteenth-century reprint of an eighteenth-century book is, *ipso facto*, common. There are cases where the nineteenth-century reprints are scarcer than the original editions.¹⁸ The careful librarian does not even reject the copy of the infamous *Ulster County Gazette*, which a dear old lady is quite sure Grandpa received at the hands of Martha Washington herself. By taking any and all *Ulster County Gazettes*, Mr. Vail has been able to give us the only authoritative study on how to know that forgery.¹⁹ Of course, the clergyman's widow who wants the librarian to take her dear departed husband's hundreds of dull theological works does present a problem. But she has to be handled lest she tell the Accounting Warden that the librarian is an ignorant person—particularly if that important parishioner has a fine collection of Keats he is going to give away. The librarian who belittles a collection of unimportant books in the presence of the owner divulges the fact that he lacks those human and sentimental qualities which are characteristic of the great collector.

We hope Mr. Blades was right in omitting librarians from his list of enemies of books. But it must be clear that the librarian who has become an impersonal administrator has disqualified himself for exercising some of the most important functions of his job. Someone else will have to take on these functions, and it ought to be part of the training of every librarian to see that someone else is equipped to do this work. Book collecting and the building-up of great libraries is as much a matter of the heart as a matter of the head. The man who is all heart and no head would be a very bad librarian. But the man who is all head and no heart is a very dangerous librarian.

¹⁸ E.g., William Hubbard, *Narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New England* (Boston, 1677).

¹⁹ R. W. G. Vail, *The Ulster County Gazette and its illegitimate offspring* (New York, 1930).

